



# Press Release

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## **BOLD NEW SCOUTS CANADA PROGRAMS LAUNCHED TO ADDRESS NEEDS OF TODAY'S YOUTH**

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#### ***Scouts Canada redefines its image to become more relevant***

TORONTO, Ontario *September 7, 2000* Scouts Canada officially announced the launch of two new programs that will target the changing needs of today's youth. The programs, SCOUTSabout (an after-school program) and Extreme Adventure have been developed by Scouts Canada to better serve its members, as well as to reach out to a large number of young people who currently do not participate in Scouts programs. The two new programs will have no uniforms, offer no badges and will cater to a more demanding family lifestyle by limiting the time commitment required of kids and parents. These new initiatives depart from the traditional Scouts programs and will reposition the organization as it enters the new millennium.

"We are excited about the launch of these two new programs because they are relevant and appeal to a kid's sense of adventure. They provide boys and girls with exciting avenues to sample a fun Scouting experience," says Andy McLaughlin, Director of Communications for Scouts Canada.

"SCOUTSabout and Extreme Adventure will appeal to kids because they have been developed and directed by young people, for young people. We look to the creative input of Scouts members and volunteers of all ages to ensure that our programs evolve with the changing needs of today's youth." SCOUTSabout offers five- to 10-year-old boys and girls a dynamic, informal and short-term structured play program. This afterschool curriculum runs one-to-two days a week for three-month periods and features fun and educational activities based on current Scouting program themes. This new initiative currently targets children in low-income areas, but will expand to communities across Canada in January 2001.

For many children who have little or no structured supervision following school, SCOUTSabout provides an excellent creative and educational outlet. Adam Whyte, Director of Field Services, GTA, and responsible for implementation, service and support for all Scouts programs in the GTA, says, "It's a great opportunity for kids in this community to participate in fun, creative activities that are geared to stimulate the mind, as well as the body. SCOUTSabout expands their horizons, exposing them to experiences they would otherwise never have."

A recent report (1) for the Canadian Policy Research Networks, an Ottawa-based think-tank, found that, "...a lack of afterschool programs is a leading cause of classroom failure, youth crime and teen pregnancy." Jane Jenson, author of the report, warned that, "As a society, we've really got to think about the number of latch-key kids out there...more and more kids [are] at risk because they don't have anything to do for a big part of their day." (2)

"We want to offer kids an alternative destination after school where they can participate in social and recreational activities that are really engaging and stimulating," says McLaughlin. "With the creation of SCOUTSabout and Extreme Adventure, Scouts Canada is proactively responding to a growing public concern for youth."

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Extreme Adventure, the second new program introduced this year, gives teenagers aged 14 to 17 the opportunity to plan, train for, and participate in an adventurous outdoor activity. Each Extreme Adventure session lasts about three months and culminates in a thrilling high-adventure event or activity. Extreme Adventure participants enjoy activities like white-water rafting trips and mountain biking expeditions.

SCOUTSabout and Extreme Adventure are designed to meet the needs of youth who are presently not involved in Scouts Canada. Based on research showing that current members immensely enjoy the core programming, these two new initiatives are based loosely on the traditional Scouts Canada activities and programs. The organization currently offers five challenging core programs to youth from ages five to 26.

- Beavers, ages five to seven
- Cubs, ages eight to 11
- Scouts, ages 11 to 14
- Venturers, ages 14 to 17
- Rovers, ages 18 to 26

Each of the programs emphasizes fun and adventure, while encouraging participants to learn and expand their social skills, sense of self-confidence and leadership abilities. To find out more about Scouts Canada's new and existing programs call 1-888-ScoutsNow (1-888-726-8876).

Scouts Canada, the country's leading youth organization, offers fun, safe and exciting outdoor adventure for boys, girls and youth ages five to 26 in communities across Canada. Over 150,000 young people enjoy Scouts Canada's programs, which are provided by over 50,000 caring and dedicated volunteers. Scouts Canada's national office is located in Ottawa.

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(1)Jenson, Jane, with assistance of Sherry Thompson, "Comparative Family Policy: Six Provincial Stories", a study for the Canadian Policy Research Networks, January 24, 2000.

(2)Orwen, Patricia, "Schools neglect latch-key kids, report find", Toronto Star, January 24, 2000.